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Inside this issue:

NH, SC, FL, MO, AZ, 2, MI Voting Information 3

Travel Warnings and 2 Alerts (UPDATED: Thailand Flood Alert)

FL, NH and SC Vot- 3, ing Information 4

News: China Admits
Jumping Gun On
New Foreigners' Tax

New USCIS Rule on 5 Filing I-130 and I-600A Petitions

Hand, Foot and 5 Mouth Disease

Holiday Travel Tips 6

Two Tips to Keep 6
Your Belongings
Safe

Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 46 November, 2011

New Voter Registration and Ballot Request Now Available Updated State Requirements Also Available

October 20, 2011 — Arlington, Va. – The online electronic version of the revised Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) is available now at FVAP.gov. The FPCA registers and requests ballots for voters simultaneously. Voters can visit FVAP.gov to use the online wizard or access the PDF fillable forms. The FPCA is a standard form accepted by all 55 States and Territories for uniformed and civilian overseas voters to apply for an absentee ballot. The length of time the FPCA is valid and its completion requirements vary by State so be sure to refer to the FVAP.gov web portal or the 2012-2013 Voting Assistance Guide: http://www.fvap.gov/vao/guide.html.

The revised FPCA is wholly compliant with provisions of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act, as amended by the Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act in 2009, containing space for the required information but structured in a more logical and usable format.

Previous versions of the form can be used by voters; however, be sure to use the current state information from FVAP.gov to ensure your local election official receives all the information required to register you and send your ballot to you. Voting Assistance Officers should send voters to FVAP.gov whenever possible and go through http://www.fvap.gov/vao/order.html to obtain hardcopy forms. Overseas citizens groups should encourage their members to use the online wizards to simplify the process, but can contact FVAP directly to acquire hardcopy forms if necessary: http://www.fvap.gov/vao/ocitorder.html.

Voters should apply for absentee ballots in Janu-

ary of each year or at least 90 days before the specific election in which they want to vote. If your mailing address changes, especially between the Primary and General Elections, you will need to send in an updated FPCA.

A complete 2012 election calendar is available here: http://www.fvap.gov/vao/calendar.html

All States and territories are required to send ballots at least 45 days before an election. If you have not received your ballot 30 days before the election, go to the FVAP.gov web portal to see if your State has an online ballot delivery system. If not, you can use the back-up write-in ballot wizard also on the FVAP.gov web portal.

Additionally, the 2012-2013 Voting Assistance Guide is now available at FVAP.gov. This compilation of absentee voting regulations, laws, deadlines, and procedures reflects the States' changes and deadlines for the upcoming elections. An addendum to the guide providing Voting Assistance Officers with steps to offering voting assistance required by Wounded Warriors and other voters with disabilities will be available at FVAP.gov next month.

If you'd like more information on the Federal Voting Assistance Program or need help with the absentee voting process please go to www.fvap.gov or contact the FVAP at 703-588-1584 (toll free 1-800-438-VOTE) or email the program at VOTE@FVAP.GOV. And don't forget to "like" us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP and follow

@FVAP on Twitter to receive timely election information.

Upcoming Holidays And Other Closures

A full list of all of our holiday closings is online at http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/holidays.html. The Consulate will be *CLOSED* on the following days:

December 26, 2011, Monday:

Christmas Day

(圣诞节 Shèngdàn Jié)

January 2, 2012, Monday:

New Year's Day

(元旦 Yuán Dàn)

Page 2 Shanghai Consulate

NH, SC, FL, MO, AZ, MI VOTERS, SUBMIT YOUR REGISTRATION AND BALLOT REQUEST FORM FOR UPCOMING JANUARY AND FEBRUARY 2012 PRIMARIES

Military and overseas voters, submit your Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) NOW to ensure you have the opportunity to vote in the upcoming early Presidential Primary Elections:

New Hampshire: Jan. 10, 2012

South Carolina: Jan. 21, 2012

• Florida: January 31, 2012

Missouri: February 7, 2012Arizona: February 28, 2012

Michigan: February 28, 2012



Voting Assistance Officers should contact voters who claim residency in these States and inform them of this news release, refer them to FVAP.gov and assist them in requesting and returning their absentee ballot.

Go to FVAP.gov and get started! It only takes a few minutes!

Register to Vote and Request Your Ballot Now!

These States allow you to submit your FPCA now in 2011 so that you receive

your State ballot and return it in time to be counted for these primaries.

HOWEVER! To ensure you are eligible to vote in other 2012 elections, including the General Presidential election, you must submit an FPCA AGAIN in January of 2012!

All members of the U.S. Uniformed Services, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who are residents from these States should submit an FPCA for these elections by going to FVAP.gov or by following the

(Continued on Page 3)

Travel Warnings And Alerts

Security reminder: It is advisable that you and your family review your personal security profile and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Since our previous Newsletter, the U.S. Department of State has issued new Travel Warnings for the following countries:

<u>Eritrea</u>	11/04/2011
<u>Kenya</u>	11/04/2011
Guinea	11/04/2011
Korea, Democratic	People's Republic
<u>of</u>	11/03/2011

Travel Warnings are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. This information is available at

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_t w/tw/tw_1764.html.

The U.S. Department of State also has issued new Travel Alerts:

<u>Bahrain</u>	11/18/2011
Thailand	11/16/2011
<u>Liberia</u>	11/09/2011
<u>Egypt</u>	11/07/2011
Congo, Democrati	c Republic of the
_	11/03/2011

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions generally within a particular country or region that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert. This information is available at:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html .

The Thailand flood Travel Alert has been updated. Floodwaters are generally receding, and the overall situation is improving. However, flooding still hampers transportation and limits access to some essential services in the affected areas. The U.S. Department of State advises caution if traveling to these areas of Thailand. This Travel Alert extends only to the areas of Thailand listed in the following paragraph. Most tourist destinations, such as Phuket and Chiang Mai, are unaffected by the current flooding. Bangkok's main international airport, Suvarnabhumi, is operating normally. This Travel Alert will expire on February 14, 2012.

Further details can be found at : http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_5613.html.

Issue 46 Page 3

NH, SC, FL, MO, AZ, MI VOTING INFORMATION

(From Page 2)

instructions in the Voting Assistance Guide, also available at FVAP.gov.

Be sure you include a phone and/or fax number and an email address on your absentee ballot application in case your local election official needs to contact you. And, remember, many States allow you to submit your form electronically, and deliver your ballot electronically or provide online ballot access. Go to FVAP.gov or your State's election website to see how you can return your form. You can find your State's website at FVAP's web portal:

http://www.fvap.gov/reference/links.ht

ml.

To find out the status of your registration/absentee ballot request, contact your local election office at http://www.fvap.gov/shortcuts/wheresendfpca.html, or visit your State website.

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

The FWAB is a backup ballot. If 30 days before the election you think you will not receive your State ballot in time to vote and return it, vote the FWAB! Go to FVAP.gov and get started! You may also submit the FWAB any time after submitting an FPCA.

Additional information

Check your State's election website for specific information on candidates, elections, contact information and links to your local election offices. Find your State's website at FVAP's web portal:

www.fvap.gov/reference/links.html.



Florida, New Hampshire, South Carolina Voting Information

FLORIDA, NEW HAMPSHIRE, SOUTH CAROLINA VOTERS, SUB-MIT YOUR REGISTRATION AND BALLOT REQUEST FORM FOR UP-COMING EARLY PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES

Military and overseas voters should submit a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) NOW to ensure they have the opportunity to vote in the upcoming early Presidential Primary Elections:

New Hampshire: TBD*

South Carolina: January 21, 2012

Florida: January 31, 2012

Voting Assistance Officers should contact voters who claim residency in these States and inform them of these upcoming primaries, this news release, refer them to FVAP.gov and assist them in requesting and returning their absentee ballot.

Go to FVAP.gov and get started! It only takes a few minutes!

Register to Vote and Request Your Ballot Now!

Many States allow you to vote only in the year your ballot request (FPCA) is received, but due to the early primary dates, these States have made an exception. These States allow you to submit your FPCA now in 2011 so that you receive your State ballot and return it in time to be counted for these primaries. *At this time, New Hampshire has not determined its Presidential Primary date. An FPCA received by New Hampshire Town or City Clerks on or after January of 2011 is valid through the 2012 Presidential Primary.

HOWEVER! To ensure you are eligible to vote in other 2012 elections, including the General Presidential election, you must submit an FPCA AGAIN in January of 2012!

All members of the U.S. Uniformed Services, their family members and citizens residing outside the U.S. who are residents from these States should submit an FPCA for these elections by going to FVAP.gov or by following the instructions in the Voting Assistance Guide, also available at FVAP.gov.

Be sure you include a phone and/or fax number and an email address on your absentee ballot application in case your local election official needs to contact you. And, remember, many States allow you to submit your form electronically, and deliver your ballot electronically or provide online ballot access. Go to FVAP.gov or your State's election website to see how you can return your form. You can find your State's website at FVAP's web portal: http://www.fvap.gov/reference/links.html.

To find out the status of your registration/absentee ballot request, contact your local election office at http://www.fvap.gov/shortcuts/wheresendfpca.html, or visit your State website.

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)

The FWAB is a backup ballot. If 30 days before the election you think you will not receive your State ballot in

(Continued on Page 4)

Issue 46 Page 4

News: China Admits Jumping Gun On New Foreigners' Tax

(from Reuters, Oct. 28, 2011, Reporting by Ben Blanchard; Editing by Ken Wills)

A Chinese official admitted on Friday that they had jumped the gun on a new tax on foreign workers mandating they pay social security contributions before the government had worked out exactly how the system would be implemented.

But Xu Yanjun, deputy head of the Ministry of Human Resources' National Social Security Management Center, said there would be no going back on the scheme, despite concerns in the business community it will push up already rising costs.

"Local government have not made full arrangements yet for receiving the payments or registering people, that is the case," he told a news briefing.

"Maybe the legislation process has delayed the implementation ... Local governments have had some difficulty implementing the measures at an operational level. It will take time."

Local tax authorities have been asked to get the system running by the end of the year, but foreigners will have to back-pay contributions to Oct 15 when the rules went into effect. Xu added.

More than 200,000 foreign workers will have to pay the contributions, as will their employers.

He was unable to say how foreigners would be able to access services such as unemployment benefits, since work visas are tied to jobs and become invalid in the event of being laid off, or if there would be a special visa issued to enable pension claims.

"There is a difference in the way laws are made here compared with in the West. In China it is a level-by-level process, with implementation done at the local level." Xu said.

"We cannot at the moment address all questions once and for all ... Some new problems have come up and we are working hard to address them and we need some time to do so, rather than answering yes or no to any question at the moment."

Foreign executives in China have complained that the scheme will increase costs further in the world's second largest economy, and that the plan is too vague and will be hard for companies to implement.

Xu said China was simply following international commitments with the rules incorporating foreigners into its social security net and was committed to "protecting their rights".

China's rules will make it more like policies in many EU countries, where citizens and foreigners alike pay into the system.

China's existing social security net offers very meager protection for its own citizens, especially compared with some of the more generous schemes in Europe, and Xu did not give details on what exactly foreigners would be eligible for.

The tax will be about 10 percent of salaries, he said, and individual contributions will be refunded upon workers leaving China, he added, without saying how that would work.

Xu blamed foreign countries, including the United States, for refusing or being unwilling to talk to China about bilateral tax exemption agreements, so employees who pay contributions at home do not have to do so again in China.

"It's not for me to say who is not willing to talk about this, but we have felt that up to now the United States has not proposed discussing this with us," he said.



Florida, New Hampshire, South Carolina Voting Information

(From Page 3)

time to vote and return it, vote the FWAB! Go to FVAP.gov and get started! You may also submit the FWAB any time after submitting an FPCA.

Additional information:

Check your State's election website for specific information on candidates, elections, contact information and links to

your local election offices. Find your State's website at FVAP's web portal: http://www.fvap.gov/reference/links.html.

FVAP can be contacted at 1-800-438 -8683. Citizens may reach FVAP toll-free from 67 countries by using the toll-free numbers listed on the FVAP web portal, http://www.fvap.gov/

contact/index.html. Questions regarding the above may also be referred to the Director, Federal Voting Assistance Program, Department of Defense, 1155 Defense Pentagon, Washington, DC, 20301-1155, vote@fvap.gov, and at FVAP.gov. And don't forget to "like" us Facebook at www.facebook.com/DoDFVAP and follow @FVAP on Twitter.

Page 5 Shanghai Consulate

New USCIS Rule on Filing I-130 or I-600A Petitions

News from the USCIS office in Beijing: effective from Monday, November 7, 2011, petitioners wishing to file the I-130 or I-600A (Non-Hague adoption) applications with the USCIS Beijing or Guangzhou offices must secure an appointment with them to file the petitions *in person*. Or they may mail their petitions to the Chicago lockbox. The U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai can no longer collect the fee for the I-130 petitioners.

Form I-130 petitions filed with the Chicago Lockbox will be routed to and adjudicated at the appropriate USCIS Service Center. This routing will be based on the petitioner's place of residence. Important filing tips, as well as additional information on fees and customer service, are listed

on http://www.uscis.gov/lockboxtips.



Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease

Hand, foot, and mouth disease ("HFMD") is a common, generally mild illness caused by viruses, which usually affects infants and children younger than five years old. Although in China, HFMD is more common in the spring, reports from around the country, especially the south, suggest that there is some HFMD circulating now. Symptoms of hand, foot, and mouth disease include fever, blister-like sores in the mouth and a skin rash.

In the United States, Coxsackievirus A16 is the most common cause of hand, foot, and mouth disease. Enterovirus 71 ("EV71") is another virus that can cause hand, foot, and mouth disease, and it is this agent that has been associated with severe cases in Asia, including a significant number of deaths in China in 2008.

Hand, foot, and mouth disease is often confused with footand-mouth disease (also called hoof-and-mouth disease), a disease of cattle, sheep, and swine. However, the two diseases are caused by different viruses and are not related. Humans do not get the animal disease, and animals do not get the human disease.

There is no vaccine or specific therapy to treat the disease. Improved hygiene, with more frequent handwashing and disinfecting areas, are the most effective forms of prevention.

Should I keep my child home from school if it is reported in the school? There is always a risk of common childhood illness when in daycare centers or kindergartens because small children share close contact, but we have no specific indication that children should be kept home.

What about my Ayi? As always, encourage good hy-

giene: wash hands before holding children or handling food and after changing diapers. Obviously, if your Ayi has symptoms of illness – fever or respiratory illness – encourage her to stay home until she is well.

What about public play areas? If there is a lot of respiratory disease around, these may be places where such diseases are transmitted, as they can be crowded, and may not be frequently disinfected. Playing outdoors or having play groups in family homes may be a better environment.

Are swimming pools safe? Properly treated swimming pools are safe. Chlorine kills the virus.

What are the specific symptoms to look for? The illness usually starts with a mild fever, poor appetite, general malaise (feeling sick), and frequently a sore throat. One or 2 days after the fever begins, painful sores develop in the mouth. They begin as small red spots that blister and then often become ulcers. They are usually located on the tongue, gums, and inside of the cheeks. The rash develops over 1 - 2 days with flat or raised red spots, some with blisters. The rash does not usually itch and it is usually located on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. It may also appear on the buttocks. A person with HFMD may have only the rash or the mouth ulcers.

What do I do if I suspect my child has the illness? Contact your health care provider.

Where can I get more info.? See the CDC website: http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/revb/enterovirus/hfhf.htm.

Holiday Travel Tips

For those planning holiday travel, we offer a few tips to make your holiday travel smoother.

Check our Country Specific Information Sheets to learn the Entry and Exit Requirements for your destination.

These information sheets are available online at http://
travel.state.gov/. Please keep in mind that if visas are required, you will need to visit the respective embassies or consulates of your destination countries. In addition, some visas may take several days or weeks to be processed, so plan ahead and make your visa appointments early.

Do you need a new passport or additional visa pages?

Please carefully review the validity of your current U.S. passport. Many governments require US travelers to have at least six months validity left in their passports for entry into their countries. China also requires 6 months passport validity to enter or reenter the country and airlines will deny boarding to those who do not meet this requirement or you may be

refused entry by Chinese boarder authorities.

Regular passports are processed in Washington and are usually available for pickup at the consulate within 10 business days. More information about the passport renewal process can be found at http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/passports.html.

Only two sets of additional pages may be added to a passport; after that, you must replace the passport, even if it has not yet expired. Additional pages cannot be affixed to a limited validity passport.

Make an appointment.

With the holidays approaching, ACS is likely to become increasingly busy. Passport services are by appointment only so as you plan holiday schedules and activities, please remember to book appointments early. See our website for further details: http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/appointment_system011309.html.

Shorten your wait time at the Consulate: Fill out your forms in advance!

When applying for passport services at U.S. Consulate Shanghai, you can help to shorten your time in the Consulate waiting room by bringing your completed forms with you. (Please ignore the part of the form that instructs you to mail the form to the U.S. If you mail the form to the U.S., your application will be considerably delayed.) Forms can be completed and printed out online at https://pptform.state.gov/FraudAbuseNotice.aspx.

Register with Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).

If you are traveling abroad, register your trip online with Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at: http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html. The registration information is used to communicate with US citizens and assist them in case of an emergency.

You can find more information about international travel on the Department of State website at travel.state.gov/.

Two Tips to Keep Your Belongings Safe

Pickpockets and Bag-snatchers!!

Please keep your eyes (and/or hands) on your belongings. It's easy to be lulled into a false sense of security here in East China (Shanghai, Zhejiang, Anhui, Jiangsu). The level of crime, even here in Shanghai, is generally lower than in comparably-sized cities elsewhere. However, Shanghai is still a "Big City" with its share of unbelievably talented pickpockets and bagsnatchers. We receive frequent reports from residents and visitors about the theft of wallets and bags from various locations - restaurants, hotels, clubs, etc - that they would have otherwise considered quite secure.

Always get a receipt from your taxi driver!!

Ever taken a 'black taxi" - unregistered or off-license taxi before? If it hasn't happened to you, it's likely happened to someone you know Americans. You may be charged non-standard (outrageously expensive) rates or some belongings may go missing, or in the worst cases you may be outright robbed. The best way to distinguish a real taxi from a "black" one, is to ask for a receipt. A real taxi driver will be able to provide an official receipt with the taxi company's name and a number for complaints.

So, take the extra 10 seconds to get the receipt from your taxi driver.

If you find yourself in trouble you may call the police at 110 for help. If you don't speak Chinese very well, you can also call 962288 for free multilingual assistance.

